

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-08

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FM AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

TO AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 826

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAN JOSE 2967

LIMDIS

EO 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR RO KN CS

SUBJ: NORTH KOREAN INTEREST IN COSTA RICA

REF: BUCHAREST 3232

1. FOR PURPOSES DEALING WITH COSTA RICAN CHARGE MONGE, EMBASSY SHOULD BE AWARE OF BACKGROUND OF NORTH KOREAN EFFORTS IN 1974 AND 1975 TO MAKE INROADS IN COSTA RICA.

2. COSTA RICA ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA IN FEBRUARY 1974, BUT AT THAT TIME FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS TOLD EMBASSY CONFIDENTIALLY THAT GOVERNMENT DID NOT CONTEMPLATE EXCHANGE OF REPRESENTATIVES. NORTH KOREANS SENT A DELEGATION LED BY VICE MINISTER OF FOREIGN RELATIONS TO ATTEND INAUGURATION OF PRESIDENT ODUBER IN MAY 1974 AND APPARENTLY TO DISCUSS POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING AN EMBASSY. COSTA RICANS PUT OFF NORTH KOREANS AT THAT TIME, REPORTEDLY DUE TO SECURITY ASPECTS OF BEHAVIOR OF
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NORTH KOREAN MISSION.

3. NEVERTHELESS, AN OFFICIAL, FOUR-MAN NORTH KOREAN GOVERNMENT DELEGATION APPEARED IN SAN JOSE IN JUNE 1974 FOR PURPOSE OF ESTABLISHING SOME FORM OF FORMAL GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WITH COSTA RICA. NORTH KOREANS LINGERED ON UNTIL THEY WERE ORDERED EXPELLED BY GOCR ON AUGUST 12, 1974. FOREIGN MINISTRY TOLD NORTH KOREANS THAT GOCR WAS NOT INTERESTED EITHER IN DIPLOMATIC OR COMMERCIAL NORTH KOREAN PRESENCE IN SAN JOSE, AND GIVEN THIS ATTITUDE THERE WAS NO FURTHER POINT IN NORTH KOREANS REMAINING IN COSTA RICA. EMBASSY ALSO LEARNED THAT GOCR WAS ALARMED AT PROSPECTS OF NORTH KOREAN OFFICIAL PRESENCE DUE TO HISTORY OF NORTH KOREAN TRAINING OF MEXICAN SUBVERSIVE LEFTIST GUERRILLAS AS WAS ESTABLISHED BY MEXICAN GOVERNMENT IN 1971.

4. ON MAY 15, 1975, FOUR NORTH KOREANS KNOWN AS MEMBERS OF A "COMMITTEE OF FRIENDSHIP WITH PEOPLES" ARRIVED IN SAN JOSE TO THE SURPRISE OF FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS, SINCE GOCR HAD ISSUED ORDERS TO COSTA RICAN EMBASSIES, AFTER PREVIOUS YEAR'S EPISODE, NOT TO ISSUE VISAS TO OFFICIAL NORTH KOREANS. (FYI: THEIR ENTRY WAS OBVIOUSLY AUTHORIZED BY A VERY SENIOR GOCR OFFICIAL, FOR REASONS WHICH ARE STILL NOT CLEAR.) GROUP APPARENTLY WAS SPONSORED BY LOCAL SOCIALIST PARTY AND WAS TOUTED AS SCIENTIFIC/CULTURAL MISSION. GROUP DEPARTED COSTA RICA THREE DAYS LATER IN MIDST OF HEAVY PRESS ATTENTION WHICH FOCUSED ON NORTH KOREANS' "SUBVERSIVE" INTENTIONS IN ASSOCIATION WITH MEMBERS OF COSTA RICAN SOCIALIST PARTY. NORTH KOREANS REPORTEDLY ACCUSED PURSUING REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS UPON DEPARTURE FROM SAN JOSE OF BEING "AGENTS OF CIA." NORTH KOREANS WERE ALSO QUOTED AS BLAMING U.S. AND "LACKEYS" OF STIMULATING INCIDENT IN THE COUNTRY.

5. COMMENT: CHARGE MONGE SHOULD BE AWARE OF EMBARRASSMENT ON TWO OCCASIONS OVER LAST 13 MONTHS
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THAT VISITS OF NORTH KOREANS HAVE CAUSED GOCR. IF HE IS NOT, EMBASSY MIGHT FILL HIM IN ON THAHFACTS OF

THESE PICTURESQUE ATTEMPTS BY PUSHY NORTH KOREANS TO GAIN FOOTHOLD HERE, AND PERHAPS INQUIRE WHETHER HE HAS RECEIVED ANY INSTRUCTIONS FROM HIS FOREIGN MINISTRY ON THIS TRIP. (IT WOULD BE OF INTEREST TO THIS EMBASSY TO KNOW WHO IN GOCR AUTHORIZED THIS

TRIP AND WHY.)

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